

WOMT Summary for April 5, 2011

The WOMT met and discussed the following:

The Smelt Working Group reported no recommendation for Delta smelt or longfin smelt at this time and will continue to monitor salvage, survey data and hydrological conditions. The Working Group estimated that the overall risk of entrainment was low given the distributional data from recent surveys and believes that, based upon what is known of Delta conditions and delta smelt distribution, a modification of Project operations to protect delta smelt is not yet warranted.

Due to flows on the San Joaquin River at Vernalis (28,000 cfs) exceeding the flood monitor stage (24.5 feet), daily OMR flows are tracking close to positive 10,000 cfs. Action IV.2.3 in the NMFS BiOp is still in effect, but is currently not constraining exports and is unlikely to constrain exports while flows at Vernalis remain high. The steelhead loss density was 8.85 fish/TAF on 4/4/11 using Chinook loss expansion. While the steelhead loss density is more than 0.1 fish/TAF from an OMR trigger, DOSS advises waiting until the loss rates are confirmed from DFG by tomorrow, April 6, 2011, because this calculation is a new one that may be more sensitive to changes in loss rate when exports are low. DOSS advises that if the combined loss rate is confirmed at greater than 8 fish/TAF, then the OMR criterion of no more negative than -3,500 cfs based on steelhead loss should be implemented for the next 5 days. DOSS also advises using a 14 day averaging period at Vernalis for the NMFS action IV.2.1 which began on April 1. This is to take into account tidal cycle variation.

NMFS accepts the advice from DOSS and determines that managing CVP/SWP operations is consistent with the intended implementation of Actions IV.2.3 and IV.2.1 and sufficiently protective of listed species present in the Delta at this time.